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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2007

In Today's Papers

Erdogan on the PKK Terror, Meeting with Bush

All papers report Prime Minister Erdogan told his party group meeting Tuesday that Turkey, facing the PKK terrorism, would use its rights stemming from international law.

Erdogan said Barzani was harboring terrorists and that international law has clearly outlined the response to such acts. He added that Turkey would make the necessary assessments before taking "a real effective step" forward in order to crush terror.

Papers highlight Prime Minister Erdogan as stressing that in his November 5 meeting with President Bush, he will ask for a "roadmap" with regard to the fight against the PKK terror. Erdogan said the US has acknowledged that the terrorists have US-made weapons, and that he will raise such issues during his meeting with President Bush. He noted Turkey would discuss its problems with other countries, and if they remain silent, it would "move alone." Papers note Erdogan will make clear in the US that the fate of the region and bilateral ties depend on "the PKK test." Papers also expect Erdogan to ask Bush to help cut the money gained from drug smuggling from going to the PKK.

Editorial Commentary on the Upcoming Bush-Erdogan Meeting

Yilmaz Oztuna commented in the conservative daily *Turkiye* (10/31): "The visit of PM Erdogan to Washington on November 5 is very important. Erdogan will clearly ask President Bush about stopping the PKK in Iraq. Yet it seems like President Bush, in response, will continue to play with words without presenting any tangible action plan. In fact, this is the worst case scenario: President Bush talking about PKK, labeling it as a terrorist organization and advising us to be patient. This will be an obvious effort to stall Turkey."

Murat Yetkin observed in the liberal-intellectual daily *Radikal* (10/31): "Given the current developments vis-à-vis Northern Iraq, the PKK, the US and Turkey, there are many questions that come to

one's mind. Barzani seems to be playing with fire as he tries to bargain with Turkey through a terrorist organization. The visit of Secretary Rice is very important to show the US's view of Turkey as

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its strategic partner. When I asked PM Erdogan whether he received a call from Secretary Rice recently, he said he did not. When I pressed him with more follow up questions, he said, 'we are going to the US anyway.' Does this mean PM Erdogan has already given up hope from Secretary Rice visit? Something is clear that given his party group remarks, Erdogan gave enough indication that the relations will be at a cutting-off point if he cannot get he wants during his meeting with President Bush on November 5."

President Gul on the Kurds-US-Turkey

All papers report that President Abdullah Gul, in a reception marking the Turkish National Day in the presidential palace Tuesday, said the US should support Turkey's fight against terror. "This is not a favor, but a responsibility of the US," Gul said. The President also recalled that Turkey was the leading investor in northern Iraq, noting, "The Iraqi Kurds are relatives of the Turks; we have always kept our doors open for them in times of distress. The terror organization, however, harms the good ties between Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds." Gul warned that the US would sooner or later leave the region, while Turkey will always stay here.

DTP is Asking for Autonomy

All papers: Mainly Kurdish party DTP held a convention in Diyarbakir with a theme of Democratic Society. The final declaration issued after the convention noted that the centralized nation-state system created major imbalances and that rather than Republic, it caused an oligarchic structure. The declaration said "we want democratic autonomy in which every region will have its own color and symbol". It noted that every region should have its own parliament and referred jailed PKK leader Ocalan as the "leader of

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the Kurdish people". It also urged Ocalan be transferred to a prison other than Imrali. On the citizenship issue, declaration said that the term "Turk" should be replaced by "from Turkey". Papers report that Diyarbakir State Prosecutor initiated an investigation against the DTP for referring jailed PKK leader Ocalan as "the leader of the Kurdish people" in its declaration.

A Joint Message to the US from Barzani and Talabani

Milliyet, Sabah, Cumhuriyet, Zaman, Radikal and others: KDP and PUK officials met in Northern Iraq under Barzani. The joint statement, issued after the meeting, said that they do not support the PKK and added that they are ready to take necessary measures along the border, together with the Iraqi central government and the US, in order to prevent all kinds of activities that would endanger the security of their neighbors. In an interview with Milliyet, Iraqi President Talabani said that PKK is betraying the Kurdish cause and hurting both Turks, Kurds and DTP. He referred to PKK's acts as terrorist acts and noted that it should either lay down weapons as a whole or declare unconditional open ended ceasefire.

EU Commission's Draft Turkey Report

Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report the EU Commission's draft Turkey report criticizes Ankara for failing to implement the EU customs union protocol in a way to cover Greek Cyprus, and for doing nothing for the normalization of ties with the southern part of Cyprus. The report also draws attention to the strains between Turkey and the Greek Cypriots with regard to oil exploration rights in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The report evaluates in detail the April 27 memorandum by the Turkish military, criticizing the army for its involvement in politics. The report praises the government for solving the presidential crisis in Turkey within the framework of democracy. It lauds the economic performance of Turkey while criticizing about article 301 of the penal code, incidents of torture, the Kurdish question and the high election threshold.

TV Highlights

NTV

Domestic News

- Opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal said Turkey would lose its deterrent power if it abstained from intervention in northern Iraq.
- Deputy Prime Minister Hayati Yazici has shrugged off as "bluff" the threats of Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani to cut oil supply for Turkey.
- Naval forces of the United States, Germany, Spain, Canada, the Netherlands, Denmark, Romania and Britain will participate in Turkey's "Eastern Mediterranean 2007" military exercise to be performed from November 1-10 in the Aegean Sea and the East Mediterranean waters.
- The ruling AKP government plans to create 425,000 new jobs in 2008. The government intends to reduce the cost of recruiting workers and will launch measures for fighting against unregistered economic activities.

International News

- US Defense Secretary Robert Gates and former counter-terrorism coordinator Joseph Ralston have joined a reception hosted by the Turkish Embassy in Washington to mark the 84th anniversary of the founding of the Turkish republic.
- Kurdish regional authority leader Massoud Barzani said the Kurdish parties in Iraq have established a commission to tackle the PKK

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issue in the Iraqi parliament.

- Cem Ozdemir, a Turkish-heritage MEP, said the PKK ban was not tightly implemented in European countries.
- Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis has urged Turkey to cooperate in the fight against illegal migration.

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